The Isson Cross

The Isson cross stood in front of the west façade of a half-timbered chapel dedicated to Notre-Dame, built in the first half of the 16th century and demolished in the 19th century. This monumental stone cross, 4 meters high, is two-sided: the east side (facing the rising sun) is dominated by a crucified Christ on a cross "ecotée" (i.e. whose arms end in pruned branches) surrounded by the Virgin Mary (with her hands joined in prayer) and the apostle Saint John (holding a book, which is the gospel of which he is the author). The west face of the cross is occupied in the centre, resting on an angel bearing a shield, by a figure in ecclesiastical garb that is difficult to identify (perhaps Saint Louvent), surrounded by a saint holding the palm of martyrdom (on the reverse of the Virgin) and a bishop, probably Saint Remi (on the reverse of Saint John). At the base of the column supporting the cross are four extremely eroded figures, two of which are nonetheless identifiable: Saint Sebastian pierced by arrows, and Saint Mary Magdalene, whose outstretched arms embrace the column in lament. Two dates are visible on the rectangular base : 1781 (which can in no way be the date of the cross) and above all 1564, but neither of these dates corresponds to the style of the cross, which has all the hallmarks of the first third of the 16th century. In the absence of any cemetery, this cross is probably an epidemic cross, which may be an ex-voto intended both to give thanks for the end of an epidemic episode and to implore God's help in the event of a return of the plague.